

Dublin Grand Opera Society



Festival of Italian Opera

SPRING, 1958

GAIETY THEATRE, DUBLIN

GAETANO DONIZETTI

(1797-1848)

Born in the North Italian town of Bergamo, where he is commemorated by the beautiful Donizetti Theatre, Gaetano Donizetti was the composer of nearly seventy operas. Only some half a dozen persist in the repertoire though occasionally some of his forgotten works are successfully revived when exceptional singers capable of coping with the vocal difficulties appear, as for example, "ANNA BOLENA" ("Ann Boleyn") which was revived in 1957 at the Scala, Milan, for Maria Callas.

For long Donizetti's works were treated mainly as vehicles for the display of great voices and a florid way of singing, to the neglect of their musical values. In recent times his qualities as a musician, his orchestration and instrumental effects and his by no means insignificant gifts of characterisation are receiving better recognition. In the two operas presented in Dublin this season the contrast will be noted between the buffo humours, the wit and the sparkle of "L'ELISIR D'AMORE" and the elegiac accents of the tragic "LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR."

★ *FRONTISPIECE. — Taken from an Engraving presented by the Composer to an ancestor of our Patron member, Prince F. d'Ardia Caracciolo.*

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GIACOMO PUCCINI

By DR. JOHN F. LARCHET

President, Dublin Grand Opera Society

In this, the centenary year of the birth of Giacomo Puccini, the Dublin Grand Opera Society will pay tribute to this famous operatic composer by presenting its first performance of *Manon Lescaut*. This Society has given several performances of *La Bohème*, *Madam Butterfly* and *Tosca* and in December last presented for the first time *Il Turandot*.

Puccini was born in Lucca in 1858 and died in Brussels in 1924. He represents the fifth generation of a family of professional musicians holding official positions of some importance in Italy. He was trained at the Milan Conservatory, his principal teacher being Ponchielli, the composer of *La Gioconda* and other operas which enjoyed enormous success during the second half of the last century.

Puccini wrote twelve operas: *Le Villi* (1884); *Edgar* (1889); *Manon Lescaut* (1893); *La Bohème* (1896); *La Tosca* (1899); *Madam Butterfly* (1904); *The Girl of the Golden West* (1910); and *La Rondine* (The Swallow) in 1917. Then followed in 1918, the *Trittico*, a series of one-act operas, quite unconnected in subject and consisting of *Il Tabarro* (The Cloak), a tragedy; *Suas Angelica* (Sister Angelica), a tragedy; and *Gianni Schicchi*, a comic opera. His last work *Il Turandot*, unfinished at his death, was completed by Franco Alfano and produced under Toscanini in La Scala, Milan, in 1926.

Two or three of these operas were failures. *Edgar*, *The Girl of the Golden West* and *La Rodine*. The others are to be found in the repertoire of every important opera-house. They stand beside five of Mozart, about eight of Verdi and the music dramas of Wagner. His place seems secure among that very small band of dramatic composers of any age who are represented on stages everywhere by more than a single work.

Puccini had fast friends and violent enemies. He was of a highly sensitive and nervous temperament, and attacks by critics caused him so much suffering as to be sometimes tantamount to an illness. At the present time it seems almost unbelievable that



GIACOMO PUCCINI, 1858-1924.

Madam Butterfly at its *première* was hooted and hissed from the stage, and was withdrawn after one performance. No valid reason has been given for this extraordinary phenomenon. On that occasion the second and third acts were played as one; but the disapproval of the audience began with the rise of the curtain. The temper of Italian audiences is notoriously difficult to gauge, and it is possible that the unfamiliar Japanese surroundings may have aroused the hostility of the conservative Milanese public. However, when the work was performed in a revised and shortened form at Brescia a few months afterwards it was received with tumultuous applause, and the brilliant success of its performance at Covent Garden in 1905 wiped out the memories of its unlucky start. *Butterfly* was Puccini's favourite work; it is deservedly one of the most popular of his operas.

Puccini is now in the happy position of a favourite with all classes of music lovers. The admirable musicianship of his operas, his brilliant technique, and his fertile and varied orchestration enlist the sympathies of the connoisseur, whilst his typically Italian flow of melody and his strongly developed dramatic feeling and power of emotional expression endear him to the greater music-loving public. The mantle of Verdi has fallen on worthy shoulders.

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Margaret Burke Sheridan

IN APPRECIATION

Some people seem to have been introduced into life for the sole purpose of adorning it. They represent the "butterfly theme" in the composition of life. They are above evaluation as they are above the merely useful; poets, musicians, artists belong to this most select coterie. The continuance of civilization depends upon the quality of its arts. A classic Greece may die but its grace of life lives endlessly.

Ireland's contribution to Europe's fund of "the sublime and beautiful" is acknowledged. That it continues, none doubt. Not the least of those who secure this continuance is the world-famous prima donna, Madam Margaret Burke Sheridan. She is one of art's dedicated people.

The future soprano of famed Italian opera was born in Castlebar in the County of Mayo. By the age of four years she was an orphan, for her father, John Burke Sheridan of Pheasant Hill, and her mother (once Eileen Cooley) were dead. It would appear then that a mysterious power of selection had commenced its work thus early upon her life.

Almost at once Margaret, aged four, was sent by the Sisters of Charity to the renowned Dominican Convent in Eccles Street, Dublin. Here she came under the special care of the Superioress, Mother Peter; here was she first introduced to music — at once the love and taskmaster of her life. In the convent that very first Christmas, while yet only five years of age, she was chosen soloist in the choir. Her singing of the *Venite Adoremus* moved many of the nuns so that they wept.

In harmony with our feeling for her predestined career, she is found having her voice cared for and trained by such experts as Mother Clement, and the nation-acclaimed virtuoso, the late Dr. Vincent O'Brien. Nor was such trust and judgement to be disappointed. At fourteen years of age she won a first prize at the Feis Ceoil. A distinction truly.

Soon Margaret Burke Sheridan appeared before the appreciative audiences of the charity concert platforms, a feature of Dublin life before the first Great War. At one of these she was heard by Lady Millicent Palmer who was so much struck by the young singer's quality of voice and personality that she decided the singer must be introduced to the wider audience of the Continent. This most kind

patroness, with the help of the Rev. Peter Finlay, S.J., and some others of the capital's leading people, arranged a concert for Miss Burke Sheridan, at the Theatre Royal, Dublin. This concert proved an artistic and financial success. Its proceeds amounted to some £600, no inconsiderable sum in those days. Thus capitalised, the young singer was enabled to go to London and there stay with *Les Filles de Marie*, at Vicarage Gate. As soon as practicable, she was enrolled in the Royal Academy of Music and there studied with typical whole-hearted absorption for some two years. In the Academy she was fortunate in being placed under the care of a famous teacher, the romantically named William Shakespeare.

Echoes from this young singer soon began to reverberate among the high places of the art. This promise soon placed the young Margaret under the guidance of the acclaimed Madam Olga Lynn. In this salon moved about her a throng of pupils and patrons soon to become her friends: Lady Howard de Walden was there then, and often with her the ever-charming Lady Diana Manners (later Lady Duff-Cooper), Mrs. Miller Mundy, Denise Orme, Phyllis Neilson Terry, Lilly Elsie, Gabriel Ray, she was never to forget, for Margaret remembers them still as much for their charm as for their genius.

It was about this time, with a significance that has marked so much of her life, Margaret Burke Sheridan (whom Puccini was to declare his ideal Butterfly) saw her first opera in Covent Garden. It was *Madam Butterfly*. So much did this work impress her that it has remained an enduring influence and delight.

During this London period, singing in the houses of her many friends, her fame and friendliness advanced in inseparable harmony. Among those attracted by Miss Burke Sheridan's unusual qualities of voice and personality, was the prominent publicist and politician, T. P. O'Connor, M.P., who in time was to earn the title "Father of the House of Commons." Through the influence of this remarkable man the young singer met many of the most distinguished ministers and statesmen of the day. Lloyd George, Lord Birkenhead, Joe Devlin. Surely it took not alone music, but charm and great tact to weld such incompatibles into one company?

At the height of the Season, Lord and Lady Howard

de Walden gave a reception of very considerable importance and prestige. It was in honour of the Marchese Marconi. Margaret Burke Sheridan was invited to sing for him. The guest of honour was captivated. Coming to her at the conclusion of her song, Marconi said: "This is the voice I have been waiting to hear all my life." Immediately he interested himself in her musical career. This, he felt, could only reach fruition in Italy. In three days the part-Irish Marconi and the wholly native T. P. O'Connor, with other friends, had raised the necessary funds and dispatched a breathless but fascinated Margaret to Rome.

On her first evening spent in the Eternal City she met together three great men, Marconi, Boito and Tosti. Wonderful plans were woven for her artistic future. It was to be "Roses, roses, all the way."

The Duca Visconti was drawn from Como by the attraction of this wonderful new voice, now heard for the first time in the Land of Music. He at once acclaimed her as none other than *La Wally*. But the music of Orpheus demands much of a worthy Euridice, as Margaret was soon to learn.

Marchese Marconi presented her to the Maestro Martino. This grim-minded, honest man, recognising Margaret Burke Sheridan's value as a singer, demanded of her the final sacrifice of art—perseverance and the renunciation of all social ties. She could not otherwise become the singer her voice deserved, he said. The Maestro gave the young singer twenty-four hours in which to decide to leave her friends and devote herself to study. Margaret's decision was no surprise to those who know her; integrity tipped the scales so that in a day she left the Hotel Excelsior and all the luxury it stood for and took up residence in the subdued scholar's twilight of the Quirinale. From her oriel window there she looked out upon Rome's great Opera House.

The friends of her leisure dropped away, the old social life she shed from her like a cloak. But losing one company Margaret found another. In Martino's famous studio on the Via Sistina she met and heard such masters as Battistini, Titta Ruffo and Gigli. A charmed circle.

Hour upon hour, in her room in the Quirinale, Margaret practised and sang. In the classic tradition of the theatre, her song was overheard by Signora Carelli, director of the Constanza. Sent for, Margaret was questioned: "how far had she progressed in her studies? Could she sing in public? She would never have the courage to sing in *Bohème* before a Roman audience in three days?" With that dash of unwisdom which is a kind of gallantry associated with Margaret by her friends, the young singer agreed to sing this, to the dismay of her teacher Martino;

"You have signed," he said, "the death-warrant of your career, you will not be fit to sing so for another two years."

She was, however, coached by Carelli, who may have taken a little pleasure in thwarting Martino. However, that may be, without a rehearsal she appeared in the Gala Performance of *La Bohème*. The planets must have stood still in their courses at Margaret's rashness, but she followed her star. Her opportunity had been created by the indisposition of Bori, who was to have sung Mimi. Margaret, the foreigner, the newcomer, the unknown, cast into the arena her gage.

In a stage box sat Marconi, Admiral Jellico and Admiral Beatty preparing that suspension of belief which permits entry into the brief *mistique* of opera. And from the stage flowed from Margaret's Mimi, the griefs of youth, poignant, alive with youth's failure to make terms with mortality.

The great men heard and understood. The first news of this great triumph was marconied by Jellico from his flag-ship the *Iron Duke*. Soon the press-rooms of the world's great daily papers resounded with the news of the new star which had ascended from the west. The morning following Jellico's message came a cable from the impresario, Colonel Higgins of London offering Miss Burke Sheridan leading rôles in three operas.

Two months later she sang *La Bohème* at Covent Garden, following Melba in the rôle of "Mimi." London was amazed; Italy, the home of Puccini, the land of opera, had declared a foreigner peerless in the modern Latin's most personal art! Success piled upon success. Chosen by Mascagni and coached by the Maestro Mugnone she created the part of *Iris* and London approved.

Returning to Rome in the autumn she sang *Madam Butterfly* at the Del Verme. This was an important and significant occasion for it was then that Margaret was first heard by the world's greatest conductor, Toscanini. He proclaimed her as in truth *La Wally*. As will be seen, this occasion was not to be forgotten by either. Another epoch-making encounter was then at hand. She sang *Madalena* in *André Chenier* at Rimini and Gigli was her leading tenor. Here it was that Puccini heard her and at once decided that, cast as Manon, she would fulfil his ideal.

Success did not erase her thought of home. Acclaim did not stop her ears or still her tongue when her heart remembered Ireland. In 1921 she had sung *Butterfly* at the San Carlo, Napoli. Seal of success and warm Italian enthusiasm, she was presented with a statue in bronze and a dedicatory address, and later a contract in *Bianco*. Then came

the news of the death of Terence McSweeney, dead there quite near to where she had sung in Covent Garden. The theatre was closed for two days. Outside its doors posters read: "Tonight La Margherita will not sing, her compatriot has died."

Puccini could not forget Margaret's voice as he had heard it in *Chenier* that evening in Rimini. A year later he is found coaching her personally for the title rôle of his opera *Manon Lescaut*. She sang it at Cento, near Bologna, in 1922. Again Margaret was to taste the fruit of the arduous years. From the tense atmosphere of the theatre she was conducted to the street, to a carriage. Here with her were Puccini, General Italo Balbo and Signor Gatti Casazzo, director of the Metropolitan Opera House, Milan. He begged her to accept a contract to renew this triumph in his, the most famous opera house in the world. This triumph in Cento was later commemorated with a plaque.

1922 seems to have been a year rich for her in harvested honours. Not alone was she fêted at Bologna but she was again invited to sing *Manon* at Cremona, which possesses perhaps the most critical audience in the world. She had been engaged for four performances; she was persuaded to sing for fourteen. Here she was presented with a gold medal and the Freedom of the City, and Toscanini engaged her to sing *La Wally* at the forthcoming opening of La Scala.

Nor were all Miss Burke Sheridan's triumphs in Italy. She created three parts in London: *Iris* (Mascagni), Liu in *Turandot*, and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi*. She also adorned the parts of Candida in Respighi's *Balfagor*, and Anna Maria in *I Compagnacci* of Reccitelli. This latter opera won the *Prix de Rome*.

Margaret Burke Sheridan never sang in America.



Real Teatro S. Carlo
A Margherita Sheridan
Butterfly Insuperabile, 27th March, 1921

She "could not bear to leave Italy and her many friends," she said. She made a number of recordings, including those of the entire operas of *Butterfly* and *Bohème* which, strangely, have never been made public.

The country of her adoption was Italy and the patron of her taste was Puccini. She sang in all the commemorations of Puccini throughout Italy and was the artist chosen to sing *Schicchi* in the Gala Performance for the wedding of His Majesty King Umberto. This was in truth the last time she sang, thus she retired at the zenith of her fame.

During the recent war, Maestro Toscanini, on his arrival at Shannon Airport from America, asked: "Where is La Sheridan? She had one of the most beautiful voices I have ever heard, she sang twelve seasons with me at La Scala. La Margherita always sang beautifully."

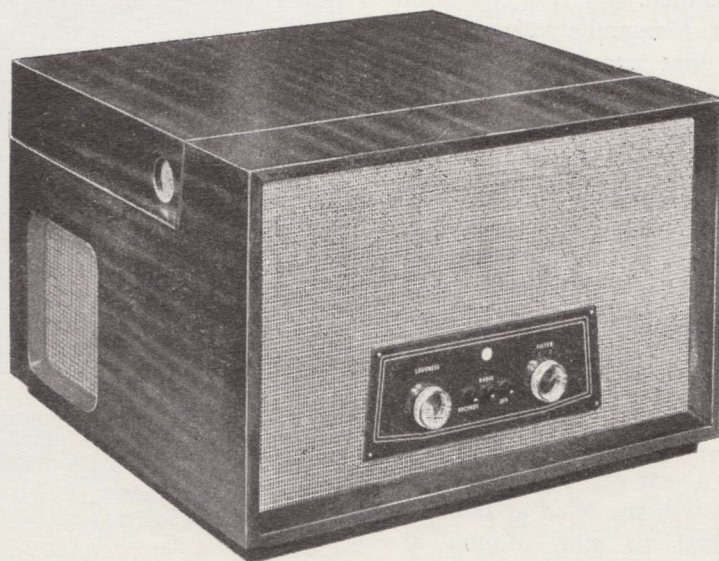
Irish people, particularly when listening to Miss Burke Sheridan's records, sense an influence lying behind the "butterfly theme" — the beauty for beauty's sake aspect of the personality of Ireland's greatest prima donna. To those who have the privilege of knowing her, it is easy to recognise the quality which lies behind the lyricism of her art, it is compounded of faith, integrity and friendliness. It lends influence to her singing. The Browning motive; the legend of the silk-spinner of Asolo; Margaret's quality is what the poet meant when he described the good in people made evident when "Pippa Passes singing."

G. C. LITTLE,



A Margherita Superbu
Wally, Alla Scala.
Angelo Scandiani

A Margherita Sheridan di
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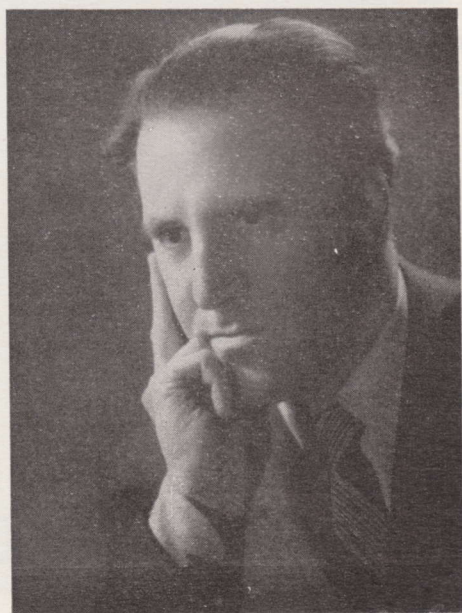
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Festival Conductors

ALBERTO EREDE (Conductor)

Dublin will be fortunate indeed in the presence throughout the Festival of Maestro Erede who will be in charge of *Ballo in Maschera*, *Aïda* and *Manon Lescaut*. Alberto Erede was born in Genoa in 1910. His early musical preparation was at the Milan Conservatory. Later he became a pupil of Felix Weingartner in Switzerland and of Fritz Busch in Germany. As a symphonic conductor he has attained wide distinction in Italy, France, Germany, Austria, etc. As a conductor of opera his reputation has taken him even further afield—to all the great Italian Opera Houses, (including La Scala), to Vienna, Paris, South America, London, to the Glyndebourne Festival and many other centres. For five seasons he was a leading conductor at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. More recently his activities have centred in the German Opera Houses for the Italian repertoire. In the current season at the Berlin State Opera he has been directing Verdi's *Falstaff* in the new production there by Carl Ebert of Glyndebourne fame. In Dublin last September Erede directed the Verdi *Requiem* for Our Lady's Choral Society. His work has been perpetuated in numerous complete recordings of standard operas for the leading recording companies with top-flight singers, such as Tebaldi, del Monaco, Stignani and Protti.



GIUSEPPE MORELLI

born in Rome in 1907, he commenced his musical education in the Schola Cantorum of St. Salvatore in Lauro. He studied at the Conservatoire of St. Cecilia under Maestri Bustini, Setaccioli, Dobici and Palombi, taking his degree in Composition. He also followed the perfection course for conductors at the National Academy of St. Cecilia, under the direction of Bernardino Molinari. He has conducted in various theatres in Italy and in Europe for many years and has directed operas and concerts in Rome (Teatro dell'Opera, Adriano, Argentina, Quirino, Basilica di Massenzio), Naples, Venice, Cagliari, Malta, Tunis, Budapest, Dublin and Oslo, and with the R.A.I. He has also directed musical seasons in Algiers, in Venezuela and in South Africa.

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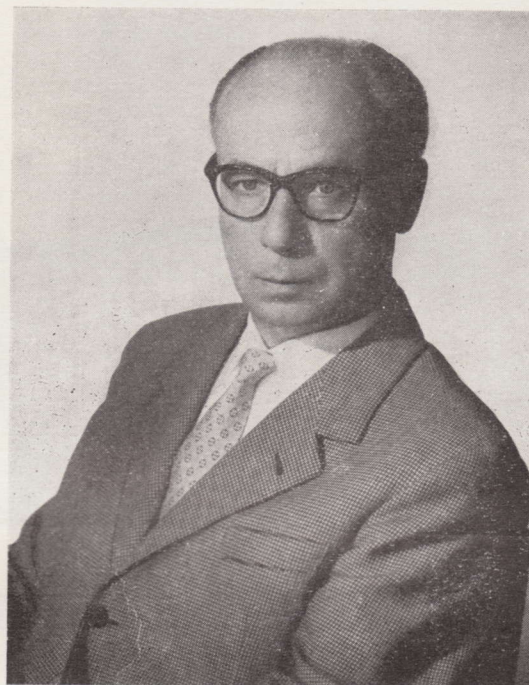
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CARDENIO BOTTI

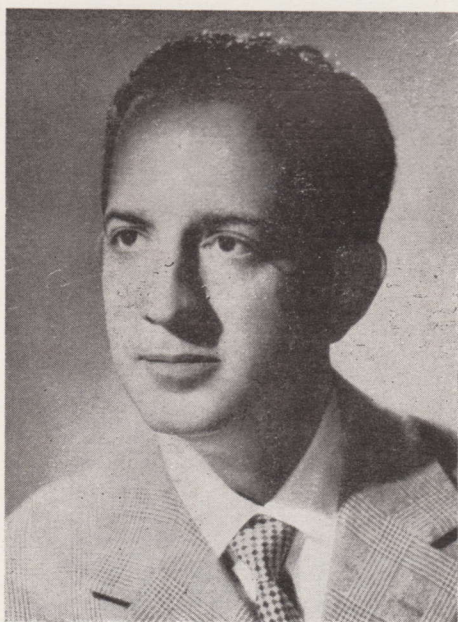
(manager). Maestro Botti's many activities, conductor, composer and man of the theatre, are well known in Italy where he has supervised the direction of many of the principal opera houses. He completed his studies at the St. Cecilia Conservatoire in Rome. At the Royal Opera House in Malta he was firstly conductor for the operas and symphony concerts, and subsequently General Manager. He conducted the St. Cecilia Orchestra in Rome at various concerts in the well known Augusteo Hall. He was subsequently appointed Director of the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and later of the Carlo Felice in Genoa. He has been an adjudicator at numerous contests for singers and composers and has been Director of the Organisation for the co-ordination of the great Opera Houses, controlled by the State. For seven years he has organised the visiting Italian Opera Company for the D.G.O.S. and the benefit of his long experience has considerably aided the success of the Italian Opera Festivals in Dublin.



. . . and Producer

BRUNO NOFRI

Born in 1908 in Milan, Italy. After graduating from high school, he studied chiefly music at the Academy of Drama. From 1927 to 1930 he worked for La Scala, Milan as an assistant to producer Caramba. From 1931 to 1938 he was with the Teatro Reale dell 'Opera Rome as an assistant producer to A. Sanine, L. Wallerstein and H. Graff. In 1938 he started his career as producer of Opera and since then he has produced more than 160 operas at the major opera houses not only in Italy but also in Germany, Belgium, Ireland (Festival of Italian Opera in Dublin), Egypt, England, Lebanon, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, Japan, North and South American countries.



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ELISABETTA BARBATO

(soprano) began her musical career ten years ago, proving herself to be an artist of exceptional talent and strong temperament. She has performed in all the famous opera houses of Italy (La Scala, L'Opera, the Comunale of Florence, La Fenice of Venice, San Carlo, etc.) and toured extensively abroad, in The Argentine, Brazil, Spain, Egypt, Germany, Switzerland, Australia, etc. She has also sung, with outstanding success, at the Metropolitan of New York. She comes to Dublin this year for the first time, to interpret the title role in Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*, a role which she has sung with great success at La Scala, and in many other opera houses.



GLORIA DAVY

(soprano). Very young Negro Soprano, graduate of New York's High School of Music and Art and of the Juilliard School, Miss Gloria Davy in 1953 won the Marian Anderson Award. In 1954 she was engaged by the *Porgy and Bess* Company and she toured Europe in the protagonist role. After the big successes obtained with her first concerts in Italy, she decided to leave the Negro Opera Company. During the season 1955-1956 she gave many concerts in Italy, and made long tournees in South America, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain. In January, 1957, she made her operatic debut in the Opera of Nice singing the title role of *Aïda*; she has also appeared in opera and recital throughout Europe and in South America. In October, 1957, she sang the title role in the American Opera Company's performance in concert form of *Anna Bolena* at Town Hall, in New York. The big triumphs obtained with these two interpretations decided her operatic career. In February, 1958, she sang *Aïda* at the Metropolitan Opera House of New York, and her success was so enormous that she has been booked again for next year.





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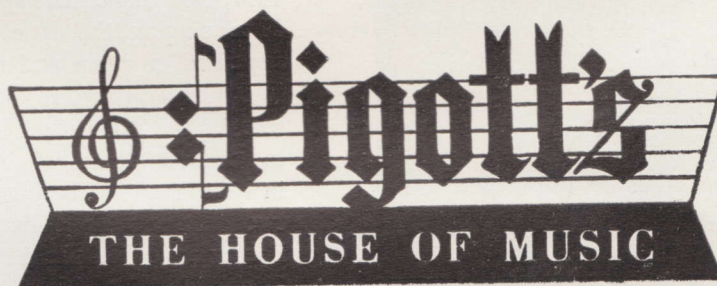
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VALERIA FIOCCHI-ESCALAR

(mezzo soprano) last year, from among hundreds of competitors, she was elected winner of the Italian Radio TV singing contest. Immediately afterwards she began her career, winning praise for her performances in many theatres, including the San Carlo of Naples, where she sang under the direction of Maestro Franco Capuana. She has also sung in concerts for the Radio, and, next May, will sing the role of Suzuki in *Butterfly* at L'Opera, Rome.

GIOY GIOVANNETTI

(soprano) was born in Australia but carried out her musical studies in Italy, where she married. She made her debut three years ago, and has obtained great praise for her concerts and operas at the San Carlo of Naples. As well as the usual Italian repertoire, she is well prepared in German and French operas.



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CATERINA MANCINI

(soprano) carried out her musical studies in Rome, specialising in the best Italian repertory of *bel canto*, from the operas of Bellini to those of Verdi. She made her debut at a very early age, performing successfully in all the greatest opera houses in Italy, L'Opera in Rome, La Scala, San Carlo in Naples, and many others, and was acclaimed everywhere for her purity of style. She has taken part in many opera festivals abroad ; in Germany, France, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Rumania and for four years has taken part in the Dublin Festival. She has recorded many of Verdi's operas for *Cetra*.



RENATA ONGARO

(soprano) a very young artist who owes her sudden fame, as well as to her exceptional vocal qualities, to her clamorous success at the Arena of Verona (famous open-air theatre with 30,000 seats) last summer, when she sang the part of Gilda in *Rigoletto* with the baritone Protti, who also comes to Dublin for the first time this year. La Ongara received her musical formation in Florence where she still lives, and has already sung in many important opera houses, among them the Massimo of Palermo, the Carlo Felice of Genoa, and the opera houses of Monte Carlo, Zurich, Vienna, and Algiers. She has recorded for Remington the opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*, under the direction of Maestro Perlea.

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EBE STIGNANI

(mezzo soprano) an artist of international fame, she is known everywhere for the exceptional beauty of her voice and for the purity of style with which she interprets, in Italian, German and French, works of the classical operatic repertoire. She studied at the Conservatoire of Naples and has enjoyed many successes in the most famous opera houses of the world, from La Scala of Milan to the Metropolitan of New York, from Covent Garden of London to the Colon of Buenos Aires. She has made recordings for His Master's Voice. In Dublin she is famous for her memorable interpretations of *Norma*, *Trovatore*, and Verdi's *Requiem*. She returns this year to sing the part of Amneris in *Aïda*.

MARIA TASSI

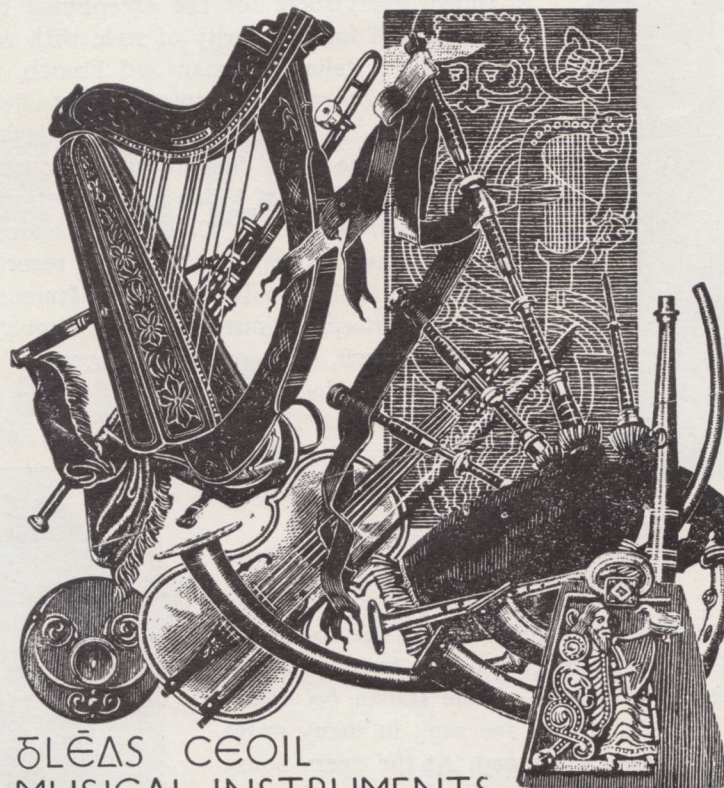
(mezzo soprano) born in Rome, where she completed her musical studies and formed her beautiful voice in the traditional discipline of the Italian *bel canto*. After her successful debut, she sang in many opera houses both in Italy and abroad. At the opera house of Caracas (Venezuela), where she has sung for two consecutive years, she has had many outstanding successes, singing *Trovatore* and other Verdi operas with famous Italian singers such as Tagliavini, Filippeschi, Caterina Mancini, and Paolo Silveri.



VIRGINIA ZEANI

(soprano) studied first in Rumania, where she was born, and then in Italy where she still lives and which she considers her country of adoption. Last year she married the famous bass Nicola Rossi Lemeni. Her career has been one of continual and rapid ascent, starred with successes. She has sung at the Opera house of Rome, La Scala, at the Comunale of Florence, and in all the large Italian opera houses. She has also performed in France, England, Austria, Spain, Egypt, South Africa, and many times at the Italian Opera Festival in Dublin. A sensitive and versatile artist, she interprets operas of Verdi, Donizetti, Mozart and Puccini, and has a vast repertoire in six languages.

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UMBERTO BORSO

(tenor) made his debut four years ago at the Teatro Sperimentale of Spoleto in *La Forza del Destino* which his voice, dramatic, full and generous, was immediately judged most favourably by both the public and the national press. The most authoritative critics predicted a brilliant career for him. Indeed, he soon passed to L'Opera, Rome, then to La Fenice, Venice, to the Verdi, Trieste, the Massimo, Palermo, and to all the best-known Italian opera houses. He took part in an opera tournee in Australia and New Zealand, and in opera festivals in Egypt, Japan, Spain, and Holland. He now returns to Dublin to repeat his success of last year *Aida* and to interpret *Manon Lescaut* of Puccini.



GIUSEPPE FORGIONE

(baritone) an artist well-known in Dublin where he is returning for the fourth time. He studied first in Naples and then in Rome, where he now lives. He has sung in the major opera houses of Italy (L'Opera and Caracalla of Rome, San Carlo of Naples, Massimo of Palermo, Regio of Parma, La Fenice of Venice, etc.) and this year makes his first appearance at La Scala. He has given many concerts on the Italian and Vatican radios and has taken part in tournees in Germany, England, Spain, and in France.

LEDO FRESCHI

(bass) completed his studies in Venice and was noted for his natural artistic sensitivity and for his fluid style. He is particularly adapted for comic parts. He has sung in the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, in various opera houses of Northern Italy and last year he sang in the Italian Operas at the International Festival in Wiesbaden. In 1957 he won the *bel canto* competition sponsored by the Italian Radio TV.



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ALVINIO MISCIANO

(tenor) frequented the school of singing attached to the Teatro dell'Opera of Rome and having completed his studies with excellent results, there made his debut, affirming himself immediately as a versatile artist with a confident and stylish execution. After a tour of the principal cities of Australia and New Zealand, during which he was widely acclaimed, he returned to Italy and commenced the well-merited ascent which in so few years has conducted him to the greatest opera house of all—La Scala of Milan. He has often broadcast on the Italian radio and has appeared on television. He has sung in Germany, France, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, S. Africa, Egypt, and recently in Chicago, where he enjoyed a great personal success in the presentation of *Mignon*. In Dublin his name is linked with memorable performances of *Traviata*, *Manon*, *Butterfly*, *Amico Fritz*, *Tosca* and *Rigoletto*. This year he returns to sing in *L'Elisir d'Amore*.



ARTURO LA PORTA

(baritone) a versatile and genial artist, he made his debut ten years ago. In a very short time his musical talents were sufficiently appreciated to enable him to sing in all the main opera houses, both in Italy (L'Opera of Rome, San Carlo, La Scala, etc.) and abroad (Egypt, Brazil, Algeria, Portugal, England). In Dublin, where he returns for the fifth time, he is greeted with sincere appreciation.



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ALDO PROTTI

(baritone) among the young baritones of the moment he is one of the most highly rated. After a musical career of only eight years he is already a famous artist, especially for his interpretations of *Rigoletto* and the other operas of Verdi. He has appeared in all the major opera houses (La Scala, L'Opera of Rome, San Carlo, of Naples, the Arena of Verona, etc.) which he revisits every year. He has been acclaimed in the greatest opera houses of Europe and America. This is his first visit to the Opera Festival of Dublin where he will sing *Rigoletto* before proceeding to Vienna and Paris.

RENATO SPAGLI

(bass) studied first in Florence, and later in Milan he successfully terminated his vocal education. He attended the school annexed to the Comunale Theatre in Florence and made his first appearance at the Teatro Sperimentale in Spoleto. He has been singing professionally for three years and is already recognised in Italian Opera Houses as an artist with an intelligent and forceful interpretation.



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ANTONIO GALIE

(tenor) having completed his musical studies in Rome he was selected by the Teatro Sperimentale to make his debut in Spoleto, with Giordano's *Andrea Chenier*. Due to the personal success obtained in the title role, he was immediately engaged to sing the same opera at the Opera House, Rome, with the famous Renata Tebaldi. Subsequently he has performed in many of the important opera houses of Italy (Rome, Naples, Palermo, Bologna, Genoa) and abroad (Egypt, Germany, France, Ireland).



GABRIELE DE JULIS

(tenor) studied at the Conservatoire Musicale Rossini at Pesaro, and has been singing in Italian Opera Houses for four years. He has taken part in tournees and opera festivals in Spain, Tunisia, Norway and in the Stoll Theatre, London.

ERMANNO LORENZI

(tenor) born in Trieste, where he studied at the Conservatoire, he made his debut three years ago at the Comunale in Cagliari, and has already sung in many Italian cities (Parma, Brescia, Udine, Rome and Florence) proving himself to be an artist of notable qualities and profound musical preparation. He returned to his native city to sing on the much sought-after stage of the Teatro Verdi, recently he has appeared in the Italian productions at the Staatsoper of Vienna. Two years ago he took part in a tournee in England but this is his first visit to Dublin, where he will sing the part of the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto*.



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FERRUCCIO MAZZOLI

(bass) completed his musical studies at the Bologna Conservatoire and subsequently appeared at the Teatro Sperimentale in Spoleto, where he was immediately noticed for his exceptional voice and for his assiduous practice. After his appearance in this theatre it was not difficult for him to obtain engagements at the principal opera houses, from the Rome Opera House to St. Carlo in Naples, The Massimo in Palermo, The Comunale in Bologna, and La Scala. He appeared in Dublin for the first time two years ago, singing in various operas, and was immediately acclaimed by the public. He is especially remembered for his performances last year in *Aida* and *The Barber of Seville*, and this year he has been chosen to sing several different roles.



CARLO MELICIANI

(baritone) born in Arezzo in Tuscany, he studied in Milan, where he now lives. He made his debut in a concert on the Italian radio TV, and as a result was immediately engaged for another concert and for their opera season. With Beniamino Gigli he sang in the opera *Pagliacci* in Regio Emilia, after which he rapidly made his name in all the major opera houses of Italy, including La Fenice in Venice, the Massimo in Palermo, the Regio in Turin, the Verdi in Trieste, and the Regio in Parma. This year he has also been engaged to perform at La Scala, Milan. Abroad he has sung in Zurich, Lausanne, Toulouse, Barcelona, Lisbon, Madrid, London, Santiago, Rio di Janero and San Paolo.

FRANCO MIOLLI

(baritone) studied for five years at the Rossini Conservatoire in Pesaro before beginning his career, and was noticed for the beautiful quality of his voice and for his scrupulous observance of detail. He won a prize at the *Orfeo* Competition in Mantua. He has recently sung at the Teatro Bellini in Catania, the Morlacchi in Perugia, and the Petruzzelli in Bari, the Paganini in Genoa, in Cairo and in Oslo. He has also performed on the Italian Radio. This is his first visit to Dublin.



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UN BALLO IN MASCHERA

(A MASKED BALL)

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813-1901

Un Ballo in Maschera belongs to Verdi's later middle period. The première was at Rome in February, 1859. Somma's libretto was based on a play by Scribe on the assassination of Gustavus III of Sweden. As regicide was involved, Verdi found himself in endless difficulties with the Naples political censorship and the San Carlo Theatre of that city for whom the opera was intended. These troubles were responsible for certain incongruities in the plot as finally settled and for the transfer of the première to Rome.

★ ★ ★

ACT I

In the audience chamber of the palace of Duke Riccardo, Governor of Boston, the page Oscar (Coloratura Soprano) submits to Riccardo (Tenor) the list of guests for a masked ball. Riccardo notes the name of Amelia, wife of Renato, his close friend and secretary, whom he secretly loves. In the aria *La rivedra nell'estasi* he rejoices at the prospect of seeing her at the ball. Renato (Baritone) enters in agitation to warn Riccardo that he has evidence of a conspiracy against his (Riccardo's) life. When a judge presents for confirmation a sentence of banishment against the sorceress Ulrica, Oscar successfully intercedes for her. The Duke has the whim that all should visit her in

disguise that day to learn what the future holds in store.

★ ★ ★

Scene 2

Ulrica's Cave. After some preliminaries, Riccardo, disguised as a fisherman, is astonished to see Amelia (Soprano) arrive. Concealing himself he hears her tell Ulrica (Contralto) of her love for himself and begging the sorceress for a magic potion which would stifle this love and enable her to remain a virtuous wife. Ulrica replies that for the necessary brew Amelia must herself gather certain herbs that grow at the foot of a gibbet. Amelia gone, Oscar and the others arrive. In the barcarolle *Di, tu se fedele* Riccardo expresses amusement at all this hocus-pocus. Ulrica's prophesy to him, however, is that he shall die the victim of the first person to shake his hand. When Renato enters, hand outstretched, Riccardo laughs in disbelief (*E scherzo od e follia*—"It's a silly joke") and so commences the quintet that concludes the Act.

★ ★ ★

ACT II

Midnight. Amelia, unnerved by the macabre scene, has reached the place of the gibbet. Her dread is expressed in the aria *Ma dall' arido stelo divulsa*. Hither she is followed by Riccardo. Their splendid

duet follows. Renato comes in hastily to warn the Duke that the conspirators are at his heels and that he must escape at once. Amelia, silent and heavily veiled, has not been recognised by her husband. Before he goes, Riccardo enjoins on Renato to conduct his companion to the city without speaking or looking on her face. The conspirators pour in, led by Samuel and Tom (Basses). Having missed Riccardo, they insist upon knowing who is the woman that was with him. Fearful for Renato, who resists, Amelia unveils. The ironic amusement of the conspirators is graphically expressed in the music. Outraged by this double betrayal, Renato decides to join the conspiracy and bids the leaders come to his house.

★ ★ ★

ACT III

At home, Renato threatens Amelia that for her infidelity he will kill her. While admitting her unwilling love for Riccardo she protests that it was not guilty. Renato appears unmoved but accedes to her supplication (Aria: *Morro, ma prima in grazia*) that she may see her son for the last time. Alone, Renato bitterly turns to the portrait of Riccardo in the aria *Eri tu che macchiavi*. "You," he says, "are the guilty

one; it is you, not Amelia, who shall die to expiate the wrong."

When the conspirators come, he tells them he knows their aims and is now their ally. Amelia, returning, is forced by her husband to be the instrument of fate in drawing lots for who shall strike the fatal blow. The name she draws is Renato's. The sustained tension is broken by the sprightly Oscar bringing invitations to the masked ball, in which the conspirators see the opportunity of executing their plot.

The second scene shows Riccardo in his study. He has realized that honour requires him to renounce Amelia and he writes the order sending Renato (with Amelia) on a mission to England. Riccardo will see her for the last time at the ball to which the scene now changes. The conspirators are seeking to identify the Duke among the masked dancers. Renato coaxes the secret of Riccardo's disguise from Oscar after the latter has sung the brilliant solo *Saper vorreste*. Meanwhile, to the elegant background music of a mazurka Amelia, who has recognised Riccardo, tensely beseeches him to escape from the danger closing in on him. But Renato has overheard and quickly strikes. The dying Riccardo proclaims Amelia's innocence and, having publicly forgiven his enemies, expires.



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RIGOLETTO

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813-1901

This Opera was composed by the 38-year-old Verdi for the Fenice Theatre, Venice, where it had its première in March, 1851. It was the first of his long series of world successes and remains firmly in the repertoire as one of the most popular of all operas. The libretto by Franco Maria Piave is an adaptation of Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse*. To satisfy the strict Austrian censorship of the day, which would not tolerate a public representation of attempted regicide, the plot was transferred from the Court of France to the ducal palace at Mantua.

★ ★ ★

ACT I

After a short orchestral prelude the curtain rises on a ball in the ducal palazzo. The dissolute Duke of Mantua (Tenor) enters telling a courtier, Borsa, of his latest infatuation — this time with a young girl whom he has noticed in church every feast day. At the same time he is openly flirtatious with the Countess Ceprano (Mezzo soprano) to the Count's obvious annoyance. In the flippant aria *Questa o quella* the Duke declares that all women are fair game to him if they are pretty. Ceprano (Bass) is mocked by Rigoletto (Baritone) the Court jester, a hunchback, whose privileged gibes all the courtiers must endure. Cynically he whispers to the Duke that the affair with the Countess would be furthered if the husband were made away with. Rigoletto wanders off and Marullo (Tenor) amuses the others with the news that the buffoon has an innamorata! In this they see a chance of revenge on their tormentor. Now Monterone (Baritone) forces his way in to denounce the Duke, the betrayer of his daughter. He too is mocked by Rigoletto, but before he is dragged away

the old man calls down a father's curse on the hunchback, who is left cringing in superstitious fear.

★ ★ ★

ACT II

The double setting shows a street and, opening off it, the courtyard of Rigoletto's house wherein his daughter Gilda (Soprano) is kept in strictest seclusion. Rigoletto enters still brooding on the curse that haunts his mind. He is thinking of the daughter whom the courtiers have taken to be his mistress. A sinister figure emerges from the shadows. It is Sparafucile (Bass), a bravo, a professional assassin. To his offer of services at a reasonable fee Rigoletto replies he has no present use for them. Alone, in the splendid aria *Pari siamo*, his jesting thrown aside, Rigoletto reflects bitterly on his deformity and the ignominy of his employment in the Duke's household. An affecting and very beautiful duet ensues between Gilda and himself in which memories of her dead mother are recalled. But the Duke has discovered Gilda's dwelling, and he now gains entry, while Rigoletto is still in the house, by bribing Giovanna (Mezzo-soprano), Gilda's duenna. Before leaving, Rigoletto cautions Giovanna once more to guard his treasured Gilda well. When he is gone, the Duke reveals himself as Gualtier Maldè, a supposed student, whom Gilda too had often seen in the church. A love duet follows *E il sol dell' anima*. The Duke departs and in the coloratura aria *Caro nome* the young girl muses on her first romance. Outside, the courtiers are gathering for the abduction that Ceprano has planned for his revenge. By means of a trick Rigoletto, blindfolded, is involved in the escapade, not suspecting its true purpose. When he discovers the outrage he recalls the curse and the curtain falls to his anguished cry *La maledizione!*

ACT III

In the aria *Parmi veder le lagrime* the Duke mourns the loss of Gilda, disappeared he knows not where. The courtiers, however, come to tell him the joke played on Rigoletto and that Gilda is already in the palazzo. After the Duke's exit Rigoletto appears, distractedly searching for his daughter and suspecting her to be with the Duke. His appeals to the courtiers are received with jeers until they realise the girl they have abducted is not his mistress but his daughter. When the distraught Gilda rushes in, Rigoletto, suddenly invested with great dignity, rails against the baseness of these courtiers and orders them from his presence (*Corteggiani vil razza dannata*). Intimidated by the change in Rigoletto, the courtiers go and Rigoletto hears from his daughter the story of her abduction. The Act concludes in a blazing duet, Rigoletto vowing vengeance on the Duke while Gilda, fearful for her lover, tries to soften his wrath.



ACT IV

Another double scene; Sparafucile's lonely dilapidated inn and beside it the banks of the river Mincio. The Duke has found another charmer,

Maddalena (Mezzo Soprano), the sister of Sparafucile. Rigoletto has brought Gilda to witness for herself her lover's perfidy. Disguised this time as a soldier, the Duke is drinking and card-playing. Debonairly he sings of the fickleness of women (*La donna e mobile*). This aria leads into the famous quartet. At its conclusion Rigoletto, sending Gilda away, summons Sparafucile and hires him to murder the stranger in the inn, the body to be delivered in a sack. A storm comes up. The Duke decides to remain overnight at the inn and retires. Maddalena, who has succumbed to the young man's charm, endeavours to dissuade her brother, suggesting that if he found another victim he might still claim the reward. Gilda has, however, stolen back and overhearing the conversation of the pair, resolves to save her lover by exchanging her own life for his. Thus she becomes the victim and it is her body, enclosed in the sack, that her father receives. Rigoletto, his vengeance satisfied as he thinks, is about to consign his burden to the river when the voice of the Duke floats down to him in a drowsy reprise of *La donna e mobile*. Tearing open the sack, the dying Gilda is revealed. With her last breath she begs forgiveness for her lover and herself. The Opera ends with the crashing chords of the curse — *La maledizione* — which has exacted the full penalty.

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DEAN RYAN, Chorus Master

Native of Los Angeles, California ; U.S.A. Studied conducting under Fritz Mahler, nephew of the famous Gustav Mahler, at the Juilliard School in New York and subsequently was awarded the New York Liederkrantz Society award for study at the Mannes College of Music where he studied under Carl Bamberger. He later secured the post of choral director at Mannes College. In Los Angeles he organised the Junior Light Opera Company and was also Musical director for the Chante Claire Opera Company in the same city. More recently in 1955 he organized and conducted the Academy Chamber Players in New York City. The debut of this virtuoso orchestra was praised by the critics ; in particular the presentation of Arnold Schönberg's controversial and difficult work for reciter and chamber orchestra, *Pierrot Lunaire* which was given in an English translation done by Mr. Ryan. In 1957 Mr. Ryan became music director of the New Hampshire Music Festival Symphony and Chorus, which gives a series of concerts during the months of July and August every year and is rapidly growing into one of the major Summer festivals of the United States. Mr. Ryan has appeared as organ and harpsichord soloist in concerts and has premiered several contemporary works for piano and orchestra over the radio in New York City. At the present time Mr. Ryan is living in Rome, Italy, on a Fulbright Grant for the observation of production techniques at the Teatro dell 'Opera and is studying Baroque instrumental and sacred choral music at the Pontifical Institute for Sacred Music, also in Rome.



CAMILLO PARRAVICINI, Stage Set Designer

Son of Angelo Parravicini, the designer who worked for many years at La Scala, Milan, Camillo Parravicini was born in Milan in 1903, and after studying at the Accademia di Brera he became a pupil of his father and worked with him. Since 1926 he has been living in Rome where he is in charge of his own studio. Besides designing sets for the Opera House in Rome, he has done scenes and sketches for some of the most important theatres in the world. For the Dublin Grand Opera Society he has arranged various sets, among which we may number *Masked Ball*, *Aïda*, *Andrea Chenier*, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Manon Lescaut*.

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NICOLA ROSSI-LEMENI

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Programme

● FIRST PART

CALDARA	Come raggio di sol
GLUCK	O del mio dolce ardore
MARTINI	Plaisir d'amour
MOZART	DON GIOVANNI—Aria di Leporello
SCHUBERT	Doppelgänger
BRAHMS	Mainacht
SCHUMANN	Widmung
VERDI	DON CARLOS—Aria di Filippo II



● SECOND PART

IBERT	QUATRE CHANSONS DE DON QUICHOTE :
	(a) Chanson du départ
	(b) Chanson du duc
	(c) Chanson à Dulcinée
	(d) Chanson de la mort
TSCHAIKOWSKY	None but the lonely heart
TSCHAIKOWSKY	Serenade of Don Juan
MUSSORGSKY	Love song
MUSSORGSKY	The song of the flea
MUSSORGSKY	BORIS GODUNOFF—Monologue of the Zar

Accompanying Pianist : MISS JEANNIE REDDIN



NICOLA ROSSI LEMENI

(Basso)

Nicola Rossi Lemeni, born in Constantinople in 1920, is one of the most highly esteemed bass singers in the world to-day. He is that rare type of singer who combines exceptional vocal and artistic abilities with a general culture of a high order. His preparation for a theatrical career began at an early age. Each of his artistic creations on the stage is based on a profound study of its historical and literary background. Even the details of the costumes, the jewels and the weapons he uses in representing a character, are authentic of the period. In fact, he has with patient care assembled a notable armoury and his library has been gathered from all parts of the globe. His special preference in reading is for works of poetry and biography as well as historical romances. His published volume of poems *Impeti* received a prize in 1954.

Rossi Lemeni is a polyglot, speaking Italian, Russian, French, English, Spanish and German. He has achieved enormous success at the Scala and equally in all the very greatest opera houses of the world.

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AÏDA

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813-1901

Aïda was commissioned by the Khedive of Egypt for the Opera House, Cairo, where it was first performed in December, 1871. The composer was then in his late fifties. *Aïda* was to be followed after long intervals by *Otello* and *Falstaff*. These three belong to Verdi's greatest period and represent the full maturity of his genius and experience. The "scenario" for *Aïda* and the authentic local colour were furnished by the French Egyptologist, Mariette Bey. Verdi and Camille du Locle together worked on the original libretto, which was in French. The final version in Italian was provided by Antonio Ghislanzoni.

★ ★ ★

ACT I

After the brief subdued prelude a hall in the palace of Memphis is disclosed. Radames (Tenor), Captain of the Egyptian Guard, is told by Ramphis (Bass), High Priest of Egypt, of the rumoured invasion by the Ethiopians of the sacred soil of Egypt and that the oracle of Isis has already named the Egyptian Commander. Radames, in the aria *Celeste Aïda*, wishes that he might be the chosen warrior so that by his victories he might win Aïda and free her from slavery. It is unknown to any in Egypt that Aïda, favourite slave of Amneris, is the captive daughter of the Ethiopian King, Amonasro. Amneris (Mezzo soprano), daughter of the King of Egypt, enters, soon followed by Aïda (Soprano). Amneris is tormented in her secret love for Radames by suspicions that he, instead, is in love with Aïda—suspicions which are strengthened by the glances she sees exchanged between the two. Masking her hatred, Amneris affects sympathy and friendship for Aïda. News of the invasion (led by Amonasro) is confirmed by a Messenger (Tenor). The King (Bass) proclaims Radames to be the chosen leader. To the strains of a solemn march all repair to the Temple for Radames' investiture. Aïda, alone, re-echoes the cry *Ritorna vincitor* ("Return victorious") and her succeeding

aria is the distraught expression of the conflict within her—love for Radames, the Egyptian, warring with the love for her father, brothers and fellow countrymen who will be his opponents in the coming battle.

The scene moves to the Temple of Vulcan where with ceremonial chant and ritual dance Radames is solemnly invested as commander and victory for the Egyptian army is implored of the deity Phtha.

★ ★ ★

ACT II

Victory is to the Egyptians and Amneris, in her apartment in the palace at Thebes, is being arrayed by her slaves for the ceremonial reception of the triumphant army and its leader. African slave boys dance before her. Only Aïda is still unaware of the victory and Amneris decides that the moment has come to probe her heart. Craftily she lies that the Egyptians have been routed and that Radames is dead. From Aïda's despair at this cruel news and her great cry of joy when told of the deception, Amneris learns what she has dreaded to know. In a frenzy of rage and jealousy she taunts the wretched Aïda with her servitude. As the slave that she is, Aïda shall attend her, Amneris, the daughter of the Pharaohs, when from her throne beside the King she places the laurels of victory on Radames' brow.

The scene of the triumph is one of the most spectacular in all opera, engaging the full technical and musical resources of the theatre. At the gates of Thebes Radames and his soldiers are received in splendour. Radames is invited by the King to ask what favour he pleases. He first asks that the captives be brought in. Amongst them is Amonasro (Baritone) disguised. To the Egyptians he admits only to be an officer and Aïda's father. Amonasro, King of Ethiopia, he says, fell in the battle. Radames' petition is that the captives be released. At the demand of Ramphis and the priests, however, Amonasro and Aïda are held as hostages to peace. Finally,



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on the saviour of his country the King bestows the hand of Amneris—together one day they shall rule Egypt. With Amneris exulting over her unhappy rival and with demonstrations of popular joy (Chorus: *Gloria all' Egitto*) the curtain falls.

★ ★ ★

ACT III

A moonlit scene by the banks of the Nile. Amneris passes on her way to spend the vigil of her marriage in the Temple of Isis. Aïda steals in to keep a last tryst with Radames before she seeks peace and oblivion beneath the dark waters of the Nile. The aria *O patria mia* is a sad farewell to the fatherland she shall never see again. (Note the nostalgic effect created by oboe, clarinets and bassoon). Amonasro joins her and in their exceedingly dramatic duet unfolds a stratagem of escape, of turning defeat into victory and of restoring Radames to Aïda. If she would entice Radames to fly with her and learn from him which mountain pass the Egyptians will use to march against the resurgent Ethiopians then victory would be assured. Aïda recoils from the suggestion but consents at last when Amonasro furiously rejects her—"You are not my daughter, you are the slave of the Egyptians!" Radames, seduced by his passion for Aïda, falls into the snare. Unguardedly, he names the secret route of the Egyptian forces. At his words "the gorge of Napata" the listening Amonasro reveals both himself and his true status. From the temple Amneris and the High Priest too have over-

heard. The Guard is alerted. Amonasro and Aïda disappear into the darkness. Radames, accused of treason, surrenders his sword to the High Priest.

★ ★ ★

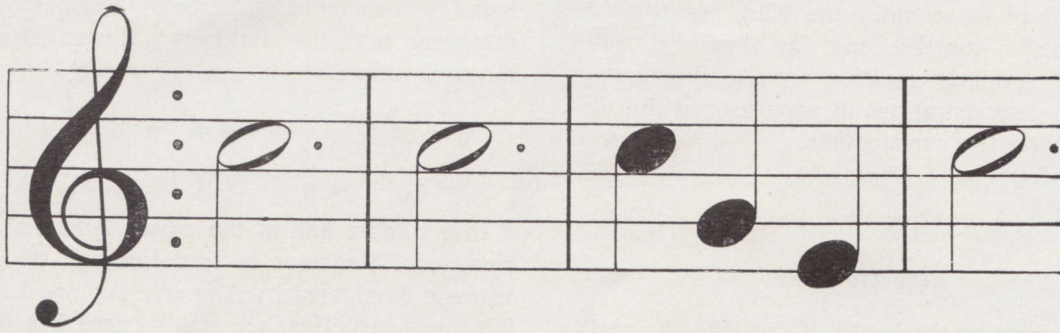
ACT IV

In a sombre hall of the palace Amneris awaits the passage of Radames to trial for high treason. This scene is dominated by Amneris. Agonised by remorse for the destruction her jealous rage has brought on Radames she implores him to defend himself at the trial and in return for his love she will contrive his pardon. But Radames believes Aïda dead and would welcome death himself to expiate his crime. It makes no difference that Amneris admits Aïda to be still alive. Silent before the priests, his judges, Radames is sentenced to be buried alive. Vainly Amneris rages against the priests (*Empia razza*) and the close of the scene leaves her alone and desolate. The music of this episode is highly charged with emotion and the scene demands great singing from the mezzo-soprano.

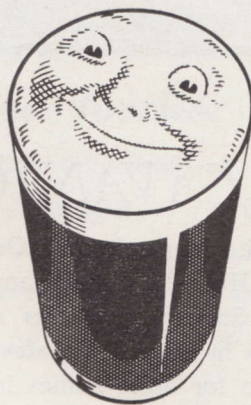
The last scene is a divided one. Above is the Temple of Vulcan; below the dark airless tomb where Radames has been enclosed. From the shades behind him a form emerges—Aïda, who has concealed herself there in order to die along with him. Together they sing their ecstatic farewell to earth in the duet *O terra addio* which fades upon the muted ethereal strings of the orchestra and the last broken words of Amneris praying that Isis may grant peace to her beloved.

BRENDAN CAVANAGH, Tenor

Studied music in Ireland. Sang solo with Our Lady's Choral Society, Dvorak's *Stabat Mater*, also Handel's *Messiah* and Verdi's *Requiem Mass*. With Dublin Grand Opera Society sang roles of Arturo in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Goro in Puccini's *Madam Butterfly* and Borso in Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Sang also for other bodies in many musical plays in Dublin.



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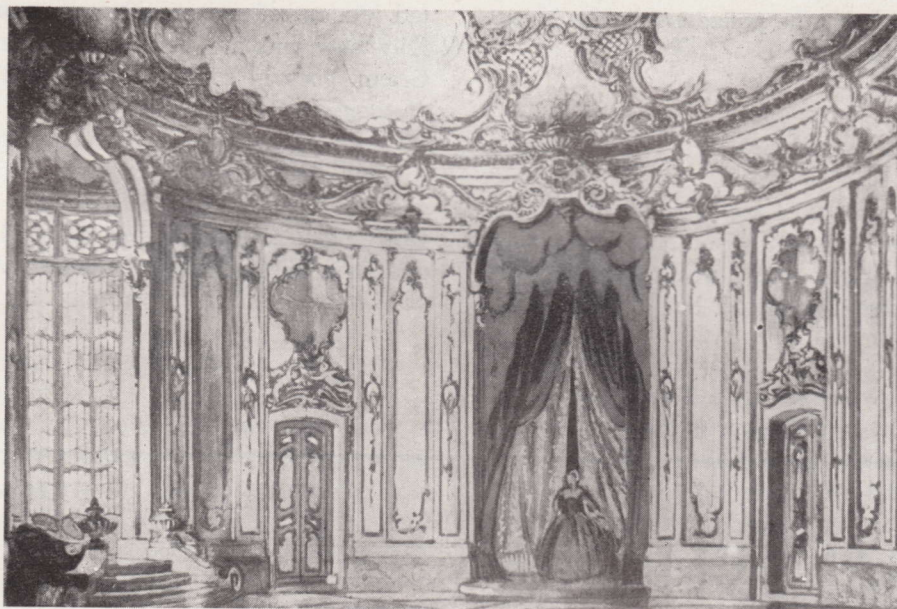
MANON LESCAUT (GIACOMO PUCCINI)

1858-1924

Manon Lescaut, which was first performed at the Teatro Regio, Turin, on the 1st February, 1893, was Puccini's first real success. Though popular in Italy the opera has been infrequently performed in Ireland and it is being revived as a fitting commemoration in the centenary year of the composer's birth which is being celebrated this year in all the great opera houses. The work is prodigal in Puccini's characteristic melodies. The four acts are episodic in character. The setting is eighteenth century France. Libretto based on Prévost's novel.

of her beauty. He in his turn is then subjected to banter by Edmondo and the students on being so obviously smitten.

The elderly Geronte is also interested and with the complaisance of Lescaut he plans to abduct Manon. Calling aside the innkeeper he arranges for a coach and fast horses to Paris within the hour. Edmondo overhears and warns Des Grieux. Manon, re-appearing, is told by Des Grieux of the plot against her and in the following duet is persuaded by him to elope. This they do, aided by Edmondo, in the same coach



Scene from Act II

ACT I

The scene is the square before an Inn at Amiens where students, soldiers and townspeople await the arrival of the stage coach. Edmondo (Tenor), a student, sings a humorous solo with chorus of students and girls. The Chevalier Des Grieux (Tenor) joins them and contributes a bantering address to the girls (*Tra voi, belle*). Soon the coach arrives. Manon, her officer brother Lescaut (Baritone), and the elderly Geronte, the Treasurer General (Bass), alight. Des Grieux is immediately attracted to Manon. As soon as she is alone he presents his admiring compliments. She is pleased by his attentions but tells him how on the morrow she will be taken, unwillingly, by her brother to a convent in compliance with her father's wishes. Before entering the inn, however, she promises to meet him again that evening. In the aria that follows (*Donna non vidi mai*), which is typical Puccini, Des Grieux sings

that Geronte had ordered. Amidst the general derision Lescaut hints broadly to the furious Geronte that Manon might soon be enticed away from the impecunious Des Grieux by the luxury a wealthy protector could provide.

ACT II

Manon has indeed left Des Grieux and has been installed in Geronte's handsome house in Paris. She is at her dressing table. Lescaut compliments her on how charming she looks and on her present good fortune for which he claims some credit (*Sei splendida e lucente*). Manon has the grace to regret leaving Des Grieux without a word of farewell and in the lovely and justly famous *In quelle trine morbide* she admits that "*in these soft silken rooms there's a silence, there's a chill that freezes. . . .*" and that her present luxury is but poor substitute for Des Grieux whom she still loves. When she asks for news of

him, Lescaut replies that Des Grieux is now in easy circumstances, having learned how to cheat at the gaming tables, and that he constantly talks of her and may even seek her out again. Now singers come to amuse Manon and a dancing master to instruct her in the minuet. She sings a gavotte. When all have gone Des Grieux (summoned by Lescaut) suddenly enters. After the first reproaches the rift is soon healed and together they launch into the rapturous duet *O tentatrice*. The pair are, however, surprised by Geronte who, though affecting a dignified withdrawal, rushes off to denounce Manon to the police as a mondaine. In his brief absence the pair might have made good their escape but Manon's cupidity once more betrays her. The delay in collecting her jewels is fatal, the police are in the house and Manon is arrested.

★ ★ ★

ACT III

In the famous intermezzo Puccini paints the scene for us—Le Havre, the adjacent prison and the waiting convict ship. Des Grieux and Lescaut have a plan to rescue Manon from the prison but it fails. The

other wretched women to be deported with her are embarked for the New World, to the degrading comments of the crowd. Des Grieux and Manon, however, excite its compassion and the Captain of the ship yields to Des Grieux's frantic plea (*Guardate, pazzo son*) to be allowed aboard even as a deckhand. The Act closes to the motive of the Love Duet in Act II.

★ ★ ★

ACT IV

Near New Orleans. Manon and Des Grieux have finally escaped and their flight has brought them to a bare and empty place which is the expression of their own desolation. In their brief duet the exhausted Manon reflects upon her own past selfishness and folly and entreats her lover to save himself. Des Grieux goes in search of help and shelter for both of them and finds none. Alone in the falling night, Manon, broken in body and spirit, despairingly realises that her end is near (Aria: *Sola, perduta, abbandonata* — "*Alone, deserted and degraded*"). Des Grieux returns to find the chill of death already upon her. She dies with the words "*My faults oblivion shall wipe out, but not my love. . . .*"

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DIRECTORS: CARDENIO BOTTI & RENATA GAEDE

LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR

GAETANO DONIZETTI 1797-1848

*(Libretto by Cammarano, based on Scott's "Bride of Lammermoor." First produced in Naples in 1835.
The setting is in Scotland about 1700.)*

ACT I

Scene I is a grove near the Castle of Lammermoor. Henry Ashton (Baritone), Lucy's brother, and his followers are searching for the intruder who is believed to be Lucy's unknown lover. Henry must remove all obstacles to his scheme of forcing Lucy into marriage with Lord Arthur Bucklaw through which he hopes to restore the family fortunes that were shattered in the political perils of the time. Lucy is ignorant of this scheme. Norman (Tenor) reports that the stranger is none other than Edgar, last of the Ravenswoods, between whose House and Henry's a blood feud has existed for generations. In the air *La pietade in suo favore* Henry vows to quench this secret love in Edgar's blood.

Scene II is the Castle park. The moonlit scene and the gentle character of Lucy herself are established by the tranquil harmonies of the solo harp to which the curtain rises. Lucy (Soprano) enters and to her companion Alice describes in the aria *Regnava nel silenzio* her meetings with Edgar at this spot. The mood of the aria is dreamy and ecstatic but some of its passages demand extreme technical brilliance. Edgar (Tenor) finally appears. He has to tell her that he must depart on a journey abroad but that before leaving he would wish to be reconciled with Henry as a prelude to their marriage. Lucy, however, knowing too well her brother's nature, counsels him to keep their love still a secret. The exciting duet concludes with an exchange of rings in pledge of betrothal.

ACT II

Henry has sent for Lucy in furtherance of his plan to break down her resistance to the marriage he has, in fact, already arranged. Lucy sadly protests. Henry has intercepted all Edgar's letters but now he hands her one, a forgery, which persuades her that she has been deserted by Edgar for another woman. This duet (*Soffriva nel pianto*) is moving and dramatic as Henry bullyingly urges the bewildered Lucy to forget the faithless Edgar and marry Arthur. As well as saving their House from ruin she may also, he suggests, save him (Henry) from the political dangers that threaten his life. Lucy appeals to Raymond (Bass), the family chaplain. Only when he urges her to obey does Lucy broken-heartedly submit.

In the second Castle scene of this Act the opera moves towards its climax. Guests, tenants, etc., have gathered to witness the signing of the marriage contract. After the lively chorus the bridegroom (Tenor) is received. Lucy enters, seemingly frozen in her sorrow. Henry explains to Arthur that she still grieves for her mother only recently dead. In haste he presents the document to Lucy and in terror and confusion of mind she signs it. At that moment Edgar, returned from his mission, dramatically bursts in upon the scene. Shocked by what he conceives must be Lucy's treachery he reviles the fainting girl. Tension heightens into the exciting sextet led by Edgar *Chi mi frena in tal momento?*—one of the greatest concerted pieces in Italian opera. In the quarrel which ensues Raymond interposes to prevent

a duel. Edgar, departing, flings Lucy's ring at her feet. There is a thrilling choral ending to the Act with Lucy's voice soaring despairingly over the rest.

★ ★ ★

ACT III

The marriage has taken place and the festivities are in full swing. A joyous chorus is silenced by the arrival of Raymond. He tells the horrified assembly that Lucy, her reason gone, has stabbed the bridegroom to death. A transfigured almost spectral Lucy appears still grasping the dagger with which she has killed Arthur. Now begins the celebrated "Mad Scene," *Ardon gl' incensi . . . splendon le sacri faci intorno!* introduced and accompanied by solo flute. The number is an exacting test for every coloratura soprano. While the vocal writing of this showpiece is extremely florid and exacting, it is not, in its general effect, entirely out of character with the dramatic situation.

In her delirium Lucy re-lives her meetings with Edgar and suffers again the terrible scene of his wrath in Act II. In her disordered mind it is to him, not Arthur, she has been united in the marriage ceremony that day. As the scene concludes Lucy falls lifeless to the ground.

For the brief finale we are transferred to a ruinous churchyard where the tombs of the Ravenswoods are discerned. Edgar, alone, tells in the aria *Tombe degli avi miei* that without Lucy life for him is vain and that he, "the last of his unhappy race," has come to this place where he will encounter Henry, his enemy, and find death in a duel with him. As a funeral bell tolls a group of mourners enters. From them he learns that the knell is for his beloved Lucy. Since Henry has already fled, Edgar resolves to end his own life himself. Despairingly he cries to the spirit of the dead girl in the final aria *Tu che a Dio spiegasti l'ali*. With a dagger he kills himself and so ends this tragedy of star-crossed lovers.

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L'ELISIR d'AMORE

GAETANO DONIZETTI 1797-1848

(Libretto by Felice Romani. First produced in Milan, 1832. The scene is an Italian village in the nineteenth century.)



Scene from Act I

Designed by Prof. Parravicini.

ACT I

Adina (Soprano) sits reading outside her farmhouse. She is beautiful, and wealthy to boot. Her friends and *contadini* also sit around in the shade enjoying the midday respite from work and the heat of the summer day. They sing a chorus in appreciation of it. Nemorino (Tenor), standing apart, gazes wistfully at Adina. His aria, *Quanto e bella*, expresses his love for her while lamenting the diffidence that afflicts him in her presence. Adina is fully aware of Nemorino in the background and while not at all indifferent she is irritated by his timidity in declaring himself. She reads to the peasants the story of

Tristan and Isolde and the love potion (*Della crudele Isotta*). The peasants, and especially Nemorino, are much interested in this miraculous potion and wonder where it is to be obtained.

Martial music heralds a company of soldiers headed by Sergeant Belcore (Baritone), who at once lays siege to Adina's heart. Nemorino, greatly distressed, contrasts the Sergeant's smug aplomb with his own shyness. Adina grants permission to the company to bivouac on her lands. The peasants go back to work. Adina, left alone with Nemorino, at first brushes aside his awkward approaches but suddenly relents sufficiently to say that he is good and modest while she is capricious. In the tuneful

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* * * * *

THE MASKED BALL (Verdi).
("Un Ballo In Maschera")
(Highlights).
Gré Brouwenstijn (soprano), Frans
Vroons (tenor), The Vienna State Opera
Chorus, The Vienna Symphony Orchestra.
Conductor: WILHELM LOIBNER.
NBR 6023 (10" L.P.).

* * * * *

DOROTHY KIRSTEN—Soprano.
MANON LESCAUT (Puccini)—Act IV.
"Sola, perduta, abbandonata."
Closing Scene with
RICHARD TUCKER (tenor).
The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, New
York.
Conductor: FAUSTO CLEVA.
NBE 11052 (7" E.P.).

* * * * *

GRÉ BROUWENSTIJN—Soprano.
VERDI—
"Aida"—Act III.
"Qui Radames verra (O, patria mia)".

"Un Ballo in Maschera."—Act III.
"Morro, ma prima in grazia."
The Vienna Symphony Orchestra.
Conductor: WILHELM LOIBNER.
NBE 11035 (7" E.P.).

air *Chiedi all' aura lusinghiera* she says he might equally ask the wayward breezes why they are so changeable. He replies that his love for her is changeless as the river. Not too unkindly she tells him that he would be better off to seek someone else to love. This duet is brilliant but full of melody.

★ ★ ★

ACT II.

The village square. A flourish of trumpets introduces one of the great comic characters of opera—Dr. Dulcamara (Bass), the itinerant quack. In the splendid patter song *Udite, udite o rustici* he flamboyantly exalts his own genius and world renown and the amazing efficacy of his universal medicine which will cure all human ills from toothache to wrinkles. The peasants are greatly impressed and brisk business is done. Nemorino hangs back to shyly ask the great man whether he had ever heard of Queen Isolda's love potion only to be told that the doctor is himself the sole distiller of this elixir. Congratulating himself at this answer to his prayer, he at once acquires a bottle at a fancy price. In the rattling duet *Obbligato, ah si obbligato* the gullible young man fervently thanks the cynical quack. What he has bought is a bottle of cheap red wine.

Nemorino, alone, gulps down his elixir. The results are indeed spectacular and Adina discovers him ludicrously dancing and singing all by himself. More than by these capers she is astonished by his complete ignoring of her. The amusing duet *Esulti pur la barbara* expresses Nemorino's tipsy elation and Adina's pique. So mortified is she indeed that when Belcore comes in she maliciously encourages him and says she may marry him in a week. When Gianetta (Soprano) rushes in with the news that the company has been ordered to leave on the morrow, Belcore presses Adina to marry him that day. Nemorino, sobered, desperately begs Adina to wait another day, (*Adina credimi*) but, still piqued, she consents to the Sergeant's proposal. The Act ends in a brilliant ensemble of rejoicing, Nemorino being odd man out.

★ ★ ★

ACT III

Outside the Inn where the coming marriage is being celebrated. After the chorus *Cantiam, facciam brindisi* Belcore obliges with a song. Then, in a delightfully comic duet, *Io son ricco e tu sei bella*, Adina and Dulcamara sing and act the tale of the beautiful lady gondolier and the elderly senator whom

she rejects for a younger lover. The notary arrives but Adina is strangely reluctant to sign the contract. All troop out save Dulcamara. To him Nemorino complains that despite the elixir his love affairs are even more hopeless than before. The doctor prescribes a second bottle, but Nemorino is in the difficulty that he has no money left. Belcore now comes in much annoyed by Adina's delays. On hearing of Nemorino's desperate need of money he tells him of the bonus of twenty *scudi* paid to recruits and enlarges on the pleasures of a soldier's life. In the course of another rollicking duet Nemorino is persuaded to put his mark on the enlistment paper. Money in fist, he rushes off to find Dulcamara.

Scene II is the village square. The girls are in a hubbub of excitement. Gianetta imparts in deadly secrecy the news that Nemorino's uncle has died leaving him the richest and most eligible young man in the parish. (Chorus: *Possibilissimo, non e probabile!*)

Nemorino is immensely gratified by the flattering interest he now attracts. He is not aware of his legacy but having just swallowed a quart of the elixir and being quite tipsy, he assumes that its magic is at work at last. Dulcamara and Adina survey the unusual scene, unaware of its true cause—Adina ruefully, since she has begun to repent of her harshness. She is unreasonably chagrined to find Nemorino become the centre of attraction. Off-handedly he tells her the tables are now turned and the girls carry him off to dance on the village green.

In the course of a longish duet Dulcamara tells Adina of Nemorino's purchase of the love potion and how, to obtain it and the girl he loved, he had bartered his freedom. Adina, much affected, decides to take matters into her own hands. For one thing, she will buy back the enlistment paper. Nemorino, returning, reflects on his coming departure for the army and on the softening in Adina's mood. In the air *Una furtiva lagrima*—one of the gems of bel canto—he tells of the effect on him of the tear that had stolen down her cheek when she saw him monopolised by the other girls. Adina approaches and though coldly treated at first she confesses her love for him and in token hands him back the enlistment paper. After Adina's air, *Prendi, per me sei libero*, their differences are resolved in a tender duet. Belcore accepts the situation philosophically. Dulcamara, having in the meantime learned of the legacy, reveals the news to Adina and Nemorino and to the villagers he declares that his elixir not alone aids true love but brings riches as well. The villagers rush to buy and the good doctor—the real hero of the whole affair—is accorded a rousing send-off in the glittering chorus that ends the opera.

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CAN WE CONTINUE?

By Lieut.-Col. Cav. Uff William O'Kelly

The presentation of opera is a most difficult and expensive business. It has always been so. In the production of opera, bank overdrafts, like the poor, are always with us.

In most countries where opera is presented its sponsors are heavily subsidised, generally from public funds. It is also a well-known fact that the general opinion in these countries is that even with a substantial subsidy it is not possible to maintain a uniformly satisfactory standard of performance. The present charges for admission to performances of opera in Dublin are much lower than those obtaining in most, if not all, of the "subsidised opera countries." Visiting managers and artists who have appeared in our seasons from time to time ask "How is it done?" and "Only the Irish would attempt it."

Truth to tell the successful presentation of opera in Dublin at present is one of the most difficult tasks that any organisation could undertake and it is only possible when undertaken by an amateur organisation such as the Dublin Grand Opera Society with of course, the wholehearted co-operation of the Radio Éireann authorities.

The members of the Society's management, made up of Performing, Patron and Production members give their services free and the Society choir (Performing members) is composed of amateurs, all this voluntary effort saves the Society many thousands of pounds annually. Without this it would be very difficult to present opera in Dublin at all and opera on the present scale would be financially impossible.

The Society's main sources of income at present are: (1) Its share of the theatre takings; (2) Patrons' subscriptions. It also receives limited guarantees against loss from Bord Failte and the Arts Council.

The seasons by the German and Italian companies

are made possible by grants to these companies by their respective Governments.

It has been, and is, the policy of the Society to perform the lesser-known operas and this is largely responsible for the Society's present unsatisfactory financial position. If the management of the Society had decided to confine its choice to the more popular operas it would now be in a more satisfactory financial position. But Dublin audiences would not have seen and heard the Hamburg or Munich State Opera Companies, the artists of the French Opera Comique or the outstanding Italian, English and Dutch artists who have appeared in the Society's productions to date. Artistically we would not have reached the present standard. In the absence of the lesser-known operas it would have been difficult to maintain the interest of the members of our choir (Performing members) and we certainly would not have the present number of Patron members.

The Patron members section of the Society was formed with the idea of allowing the Society to undertake the lesser-known operas secure in the knowledge that the higher-priced seats would be sold and occupied for the performances of those operas.

It is the ambition of the management to reach the stage in the near future when each season will pay its way through box-office takings and the limited guarantees against loss, as at present. There is, however, no hope that we can make any progress in reducing the debt which has been incurred by the Society over the years since its formation and which at times seriously threatens the future of the Society.

The Society's position is quite clear. We can maintain the present standard of performance in the present circumstances.

We cannot, on the other hand, continue to ignore the financial debt that we have incurred over the years

in reaching the present artistic standard. To reduce this debt from the box-office takings of future seasons we must agree to a drastic reduction in the standard of our productions. It would also entail our confining our activities to the well known and popular operas. To ensure this profit we would have to greatly reduce our outgoings as we must take into account the fact that as we are budgeting for a profit we would not become entitled to call on the guarantees against loss that we incur at present. In view of this I am sure it will be agreed that the present standard of production should be maintained and improved, if possible. Ways and means other than profit on future seasons' takings must be found to improve the Society's financial position.

One way comes to mind, that is, in the absence of grants or subsidy, would be to double the present number of Patron members. If the Society's Patrons totalled 1,000 active members this would result in a welcome improvement in the Society's financial position. The demand for the higher priced seats would increase and part of the Patron members' annual subscription could go to reduce the present debt.

Many say that it should not be difficult to have 1,000 Patron members in a Society such as ours. In fact, we are at present very far short of that figure. Recently there has been a welcome increase in the number of Patron members. There are, no doubt, many who are interested in supporting the activities of the Society and who are also in a position to become Patron members but through one reason or another put off becoming members. If these opera-goers will only realise that by becoming a Patron

member now they will be helping the Society to continue its activities, to maintain the present standard and to secure the future of the Society.

It will be agreed that the Society is now part of the cultural life of Dublin. The works performed by the Society since its formation in 1941 are its formidable contribution to the advancement of music in Dublin. Over the years many of the world's leading artists have appeared in Dublin. This would not have been possible without the Dublin Grand Opera Society.

The people of Dublin should look upon the Society as *their* Society. If it ceased its activities it would leave a serious gap in the capital's musical activities.

The Society has done its part in putting Dublin and Ireland on the world operatic map. Its activities since its formation, which appear on the opposite page, speak for themselves. This is the result of hard and painstaking work by Patron, Performing and Production members. In order to allow this work to continue you can do your part by becoming a Patron Member.

Patron membership has many advantages and the greatest pleasure one derives from such membership is the fact that you are actively helping to secure the future of opera in Dublin. More than that, your membership helps to give the Society financial security and this in turn should result in a wider repertoire and an all-round higher standard of performance. This will give us the answer we desire so that in future when we are asked "How is it done?" we can say in truth: "Through the wholehearted co-operation of the citizens of Dublin."

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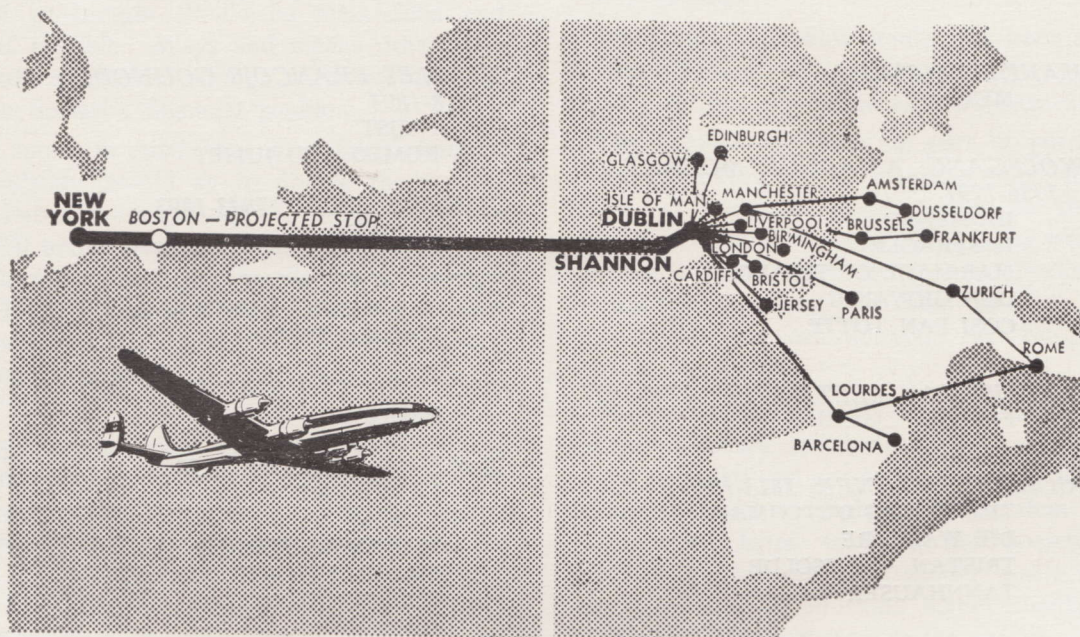
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Yoaklev, Miss Alice
 Yturralde, His Excellency Senor
 Mariano de
 Yturralde, Her Excellency Dona
 Isabella de

BENIAMINO GIGLI

Born, March 20th, 1890 ; Died November 30th, 1957

A TRIBUTE

{BY TOMMY O'BRIEN}

IT was quite an occasion—that warm summer night 28 years ago when I first both saw and heard Beniamino Gigli. The voice I had long known on gramophone records. That luxurious, sensuous tone ; that fullness, evenness and perfect steadiness throughout the entire range ; that creamy mezza-voce. I loved it right from the first time I heard it on, I well remember, a pre-electric record dating from the early twenties of a duet from Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz*. And now I was to experience the real thing ! Little wonder that I was full of a thrilling expectancy as I made my way up Bow Street, dodged past fruit and flower-laden porters and arrived at well-loved Covent Garden. I was in good time; time enough to leisurely saunter around and watch the arrival of notabilities; time enough to be amused by a policeman who, standing outside Bow Street Station just across the road, viewed the goings-on with what seemed to me a kind of gentle tolerance—that tolerance which one extends to young children at their pranks or to older folk not quite right in the head.

A last look at the posters outside the theatre to re-assure myself that Gigli was indeed to sing that night. Yes, there it was : "Royal Opera Covent Garden. This evening's performance, Tuesday, May 27th, 1930, at 8. Giordano's opera, 'Andrea Chenier,' in Italian. Andrea Chenier — Beniamino Gigli. Gerard — Giovanni Inghilleri. Maddalena—Margherita Sheridan." Then, up the long flights of stone steps to the amphitheatre stalls to join an audience to which London's Italian colony must have contributed many hundreds—come to proudly welcome at his British debut the shoemaker's son from Recanati who had won for himself the title of The World's Greatest Tenor.

Would he be as good as his records showed him to be ? Would he live up to his reputation ? I had not long to wait for the answer. For the tenor's supreme opportunity to display his voice and art comes in the very first act of *Andrea Chenier*. And there was no mistaking that Gigli rang the bell with his *Un Di All 'Azzurro Spazio*. Beginning the famous aria with the velvety softness of a caress, the voice gradually grew in volume leading up to the blazing intensity of *Il Firmamento* ; while the thrillingly declaimed dramatic passages at the close brought forth a quality of tone which, in its unforced power, its roundness, its steadiness and beauty I have never heard equalled. Gigli had come and had undeniably conquered.

In later years I was to become familiar with Gigli's interpretations of the chief tenor roles in *La Traviata*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *La Bohème* and *Aïda*. But I think I shall always remember him most vividly that night in 1930 when, for the first time in my experience, his excited compatriots broke the then rigid—and slightly ridiculous—Covent Garden no-applause-after-arias rule. Memory is helped, of course, by the fact that, ignoring the frostily disapproving glances of my neighbours, I joined in lustily myself on behalf of my native Tipperary.

I think it is true to say that Gigli, more than anyone else, brought Italian opera to the people over the last three decades or so. He was a wonderful ambassador; for, even though they may never have had the chance to hear him on the stage, millions of people the world over heard his voice on records (no voice that I have heard recorded so perfectly), on the radio and on films; were captivated; and became, as it were, opera-conscious overnight. For how very many was

Che Gelida Manina not an aria from the first act of *Bohème* but — “Oh, that lovely thing that Gigli sings!” Or *E Lucevan Le Stelle*. Or *Cielo E Mar*. Or *Salve Dimora*. One could go on and on quoting examples. From such approaches did they enter this new and fascinating world of opera.

And then, his stage admirers. How they fairly revelled in that seemingly inexhaustible flood of luscious sound, poured out, as it always was, with such incomparable ease! Enough, even, to at least temporarily disarm the most severely critical—to make them forget the sometimes inelegant phrasing, the comparative lack of flexibility, the occasional scoop, the inevitable intrusive aspirates — enough to sweep them off their feet with the rest on a wave of sheerly intoxicated delight.

Yes, there were faults of style. But how trifling they seemed compared with the major virtues: The enthusiasm which the singer gave to every role but which never became so excessive as to make him forget the need to conserve his vocal resources; the warmth of his personality, whether in opera or concert; his sureness of intonation and his good sense of rhythm; the exquisite delicacy with which he invested many a quietly expressive passage, particularly in the Puccini operas where, I have always felt, he was quite at his best; the absolutely effortless top notes; and, over and above all, the uniquely beautiful Gigli Tone.

A final picture. The time—twenty odd years ago.

The place—London's Albert Hall. We had heard at least a dozen operatic arias (two top C's, ten B flats—I counted them!) and the same number of songs. More than enough? Not at all. Like Oliver, we ask for more. But, unlike Oliver, there is no outraged Mr. Bumble to say us nay. Instead, a squat, unhandsome, smiling little man ambles on to the platform Donald-Duckwise, bows, make a friendly little grimace, holds up his hands in mock protest and departs. No absolute finality there, we feel—we know, for have we not been through this many times before? So, the cheering is renewed. The little man reappears, bows, smirks, retires. Five or six times the sequence is repeated. And then, all-conquering never-say-diers, we sink back into our seats in blissful contentment as we watch the charmer fairly scurry to the platform—followed this time by his accompanist. Well we know what that means. Capitulation on the one hand, victory on the other. And as we listen to that tireless voice flood the vast theatre with the strains of a popular Neapolitan song—the singer obviously enjoying every note of it just as much as his audience—even we are satisfied and demand no more. All good things must come to an end. And there will always remain the memory—the memory of a simple, homely, entirely lovable personality and a truly great tenor.

What was it that a judge at the international singing contest at Parma in 1914 wrote under the name of the winning 24-years-old-contender? Ah yes: “At last we have found THE tenor.” How right he was !!!

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AER LINGUS

Ireland's National Airline

Since most early attempts at flying provided more entertainment than scientific progress, one may say that the association of the stage with flying began at a very early age. Quite an audience had gathered at Stirling Castle in 1508 when the Abbot Damian launched himself from the ramparts equipped with home-made wings. He broke his leg. In contrast, the first flight of the Wright Brothers in 1903 played to an almost empty house!

Jimmy "Schnozzle" Durante was making his first European appearance in Dublin when a tiny five-seater aeroplane flew over the city and headed out to sea. It was the beginning of Aer Lingus, Ireland's national airline. Earlier the plane had been blessed at Baldonnell military aerodrome and its departure on the historic flight had been watched by the company's entire staff—twelve people.

Business was slack in those early years. In the first twelve months the airline carried less than 900 passengers. Then came World War II which resulted in the suspension of almost all air services from Ireland and Britain.

Flying was the star of what one author described as the "Big Show." The War was a hothouse in which aviation developed rapidly. Armies moved by air, armies fought in the air . . . and the theatre took to the air as stars of stage, screen and radio flew all over the world to entertain the troops.

No aspect of industry showed as remarkable a post-war recovery as aviation. Aer Lingus seldom carried more than 6,000 passengers annually during the war years. This figure began to grow—5,600 in the last year of the war . . . 21,600 . . . 76,000 . . . 152,000 . . . 167,000 . . . 199,000 . . . 220,000.

The opening of new routes followed in quick succession—London, Shannon, Paris, Manchester, Amsterdam, Isle of Man, Birmingham, Jersey

By 1950 Aer Lingus was carrying over 220,000 passengers annually and in that year was awarded the

Cumberbatch Trophy for safety and reliability in operation.

The need for larger aircraft became obvious and in 1951 the company became the first airline outside Britain to order the popular turbo-prop Viscounts.

When Alec Guinness stepped from his aircraft on a bright sunny day in 1954 he was surprised to see balconies crowded to capacity. It was the day of the arrival of the Viscounts and several thousand sight-seers travelled to the airport to see the new aircraft.

The Viscounts were an immediate success. They were put into operation on routes from Dublin to London, Manchester, Paris and Amsterdam and provided a fillip to traffic. Further expansion followed. In that year a new route to Lourdes was opened and in the following year this was extended to Barcelona. In 1957 the company extended its network to Dusseldorf, Brussels, Frankfurt, Zurich and Rome.

The stage has always had wings, but it was only in recent years that it has taken flight. Entire productions—stars, officials, stage-hands and props have been flown on many routes and to-day air transport enables performers to meet engagements over a wide area by cutting travelling time to the minimum.

In nearly twenty-two years of operation, Aer Lingus has grown from a one-route, one-plane company employing twelve people, carrying less than 900 passengers in a year, to an international airline serving eleven countries, employing 1,800 staff and carrying almost 500,000 passengers per annum.

Artists of the calibre of Gigli, Tito Gobbi, Jussi Bjorling have used its services. Screen idols such as Gergory Peck, Ava Gardner, Anna Neagle, Jose Ferrer, Danny Kaye have all flown on the Irish national airline. Popular singers such as Frankie Laine and Rosemary Clooney are also numbered among its passengers. Aer Lingus can rightly claim to be one of Ireland's links with World Theatre.

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The Society invites those interested in Grand Opera to become Patron Members and enjoy the advantages of such Membership.

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If you wish to become a Patron Member please complete the form below and forward to

THOMAS A. DOYLE,

Chairman Patron Members' Committee,

Dublin Grand Opera Society,

11 Leinster Street, Dublin.

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